

Holland ————— *House*

MR. FOX'S SPEECH.

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THE
S P E E C H
OF THE HONORABLE
CHARLES JAMES FOX,
ON THE MOTION FOR
AN ENQUIRY
INTO THE
STATE OF THE NATION,

On the 25th of March, 1801.

TO WHICH IS ADDED
AN APPENDIX,
ILLUSTRATING SOME PASSAGES OF THE SPEECH,
AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE
MEANS OF FORMING A FULL JUDGMENT
UPON THE
Most Momentous QUESTIONS that agitate the Public
IN THE PRESENT CRISIS.

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MR. FOX'S
SPEECH
ON THE
STATE OF THE NATION.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
Die Mercurii, 25^o Martii, 1801^o.

“ **T**HAT this house resolve itself into a committee, to consider of the state of the nation,” was moved by Mr. GREY, after a speech of very great eloquence.

To Mr. GREY, Mr. DUNDAS replied at length; and concluded with giving a negative to the motion.

Lord TEMPLE supported the motion; avowing, however, his approbation of Mr. PITTS's ministry.

Two or three other members, panegyrists of the former, as well as the present, administration, spoke both for and against the question.

About half past nine Mr. PITT rose, and, in an eloquent speech, resisted Mr. GREY's motion till twelve o'clock,

WHEN MR. FOX addressed the house, in substance nearly as follows:

* * * * *

“ LATE as the hour is, (it was past midnight) I shall beg leave, even under the designation of ‘*a new member*,’ by which the honorable gentleman (Mr. PITT) has complimented me, to avail myself of the indulgence which the house usually shews to persons of that description; and, unwilling as I am to trespass long upon your attention, it will be difficult to dismiss very shortly the whole of the arguments that apply to the question before the house; especially after the confused state in which the honorable gentleman’s speech has left the real matters at issue, and that laborious complication which renders it not an easy task to methodize a reply, or put one’s argument into a plain and distinct order.

“ First, I shall take the liberty of adverting to that part of the honorable gentleman’s speech (certainly not the most solid or splendid part of it) which relates personally to myself; and of which the introduction, upon the present occasion, is a decisive proof how bereft of real defence the honorable gentleman must feel himself, when

he is driven to the expedient of reviving a circumstance which has but little analogy to the point before you ; and which, when explained and understood, will lend not the least sanction or support to the system of his majesty's late ministers, respecting the question between this country and the Northern powers.

“ I certainly did, in my capacity of secretary of state, offer, by his majesty's commands, to the Empress of Russia in the year 1782, the recognition of the principle in question, for the purpose of inducing that princess to enter into a close alliance with this country. In rejecting the insinuation, of this proposal being *my* sole act, let me not be understood to shrink from that measure as ‘ rash and inconsiderate : ’ on the contrary, I avow and affirm that it was most wise, timely, and judicious ; but for the sake of truth let it be remembered that the measure which it fell officially to my lot to propose to the court of Russia, at the time alluded to, was of course the measure of the king's whole council, and not mine ; which council consisted of many of the greatest names in the country, such as the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord JOHN CAVENDISH, the Duke of RICHMOND, the Marquis of LANSDOWN, Lord KEPPEL, &c. &c.—it was, in a word, the act of an administration which has been the least censured, and the most praised, of any that existed during the king's reign.

“ The honorable gentleman challenges any person to discuss the question with the neutral powers, as ‘ a statesman or a lawyer : ’—now, though I can venture to touch the matter only

in the first of these characters, I can assure the house that the concession, whatever it was, of the ministry, which I offered as our joint act to the Empress of Russia in the year 1782, and so often alluded to by the honorable gentleman, had the concurrence of as great lawyers as ever distinguished this country at any one period; for whatever may have been the other defects of that short administration, in it there certainly was no want of eminent lawyers. No less than three of the luminaries of that profession, namely, **LORD ASHBURTON**, **LORD CAMDEN**, and **LORD THURLOW**, were members of that cabinet; and far enough from thinking that the offer then made to the Russian court 'laid at the feet of that government all the sources of the naval greatness of this country,' to repeat the rant of the honorable gentleman, these learned and noble persons, together with the whole body of that administration, were profoundly convinced, not that what we offered was slight and trifling, but that, important as it was, it would have been highly to the advantage of this country, that our proposal had been adopted by the government of Russia.'

" In making this offer, I was so far from being mysterious,—so little apprehension did we feel that our proposition to Russia would involve our country in any of the perils from other powers which the fatuity of the honorable gentleman's (Mr. PITT's) ministry has brought upon it, that, instead of sending through the more usual channel of our ambassador at that court, who, if I mistake not, was **LORD MALMESBURY**, I applied here directly to **MR. SIMOLIN**, the Russian minister at this court, and with him en-

deavoured to accomplish the negotiation. To him I offered a *quid pro quo*—and meant to give nothing without getting a full equivalent. I wished to separate *Russia* entirely from any connections injurious to *Great Britain*, and to attach that power solidly and permanently to this country. The honorable gentleman has dwelt with some satisfaction upon the expressions of my letter to Mr. SIMOLIN. He has the advantage over me, of having lately read that letter in the office—(by the way, if that letter be a document for arguing the present dispute in this house, this house should have a copy of that letter)—and seems strangely enough to think that he derives some pretext for his own policy, in my description of the magnitude of our proposed concessions in 1782. Why, what would the honorable gentleman, or any other man, think of me, if I wrote otherwise than he states me to have written upon that occasion?

“ If he were negotiating with France about the surrender of that Belgium, the retention of which he had so lately made a *sine qua non*, would he begin by undervaluing and understating the extent, fertility, and population of those provinces.—I, of course, did not begin by depreciating to the government of Russia the very boon I was tendering as an inducement to a great and beneficial alliance.

“ The honorable gentleman rejoices in the failure of that negotiation;—in as much as its success would have enabled *Russia* to protect the commerce of *France*, and been the means of

preventing this country from annihilating it, in the present war. What ! Russia assist the commerce of France? Russia ! the loudest in thundering its maledictions against the French revolution—the first to profess its zeal in the crusade?—the very power who formally waved this neutral principle, declaring that all general principles should yield to the superior object of overthrowing ‘ regicide republicanism,’ and every thing else with which the royal coalition had stigmatised the French in this war? As to the destruction of the French trade, is it certain that all the efforts of all the combined powers, or any possible effect arising from the most successful assertion of what the government of England is now contending for, have hurt the commerce of France so much as its own disorganizations of all kinds upon that subject since the period of the revolution? I believe not. Besides, do you set down for nothing the captures made by your own fleets?

“ In a word, the honorable gentleman will find nothing in the measure, to which he has alluded with so ludicrous a triumph, to countenance the system he has pursued towards the Northern powers—to the consideration of which I shall now proceed, having said this much in relation to what the honorable gentleman has directed so personally at *myself*.

“ THE QUESTION WITH THE NORTHERN POWERS has been divided by the honorable gentleman into five parts. These five I shall render into three; namely, *Free bottoms making free goods*—*The contraband of war*—*The right*

of search under convoy. These three heads (comprehending the collateral and dependent questions of *blockade*, and the carrying of the *coasting* and *colonial trade* of *belligerents*, by abuse of the first and third proposition) form the essence of the present dispute with the Northern powers, and which, in common acceptation, is called '*the neutral principle*.'

"Whether this neutral principle be jacobinical or not, its origin is certainly of more antiquity than the French revolution, being as old as the middle of the last century, and having for its patron and propounder no less a republican than Frederick the Great. That prince was undoubtedly a philosopher, and by some deemed not quite orthodox in his theology. This neutral principle might therefore with as much reason be called *deistical* as *jacobinical*; and if the honorable gentleman (Mr. PITT) had now been in as high favour with the church as in past times, possibly he might get this point, for which the powers of the North are contending, branded with some such epithet by ecclesiastical authority; in the same manner as, towards the end of the seventeenth century, the university of Oxford declared that the principles which led to the assertion and conservation of the British constitution, and which seated the present royal family upon the throne of England, were 'doctrines tending to *atheism*.' The one imputation is as just as the other; and jacobinism applies with exactly as much truth to the neutral question, as atheism to the principles of the English revolution. In reality, sir, the honorable gen-

tleman's indiscriminate cry of Jacobin ! Jacobin ! to every thing and person that he dislikes, has brought an utter contempt upon this continual cant. He has worn it out ;—and all the terrors he would conjure up from it are become an absolute bugbear. With far more grace and likelihood might this term 'jacobin' be retorted upon himself, and several indeed of his own measures,—of which one of the most recent might, perhaps, in the judgment of many (though I am not disposed so to describe it), be considered as strictly such : I mean the honorable gentleman's late communication to the catholics of Ireland, upon the event of his resignation.

" The next assertor of this neutral question was that implacable zealot in jacobinical faith, that virulent propagator of revolutionary doctrines, the late Empress of RUSSIA ; who, in the year 1780 and 1781, entered, with all the other Northern powers, into a confederacy, differing, I apprehend, in nothing from that which the honorable gentleman has stigmatised so copiously this night ; except, as I understand, by some additional precautions in the recent league.

" Now, would any body believe that this honorable gentleman, in his capacity of cabinet minister, should, in less than two years after that confederacy was formed, avail himself of the mediation of those very powers between this country and its enemies ; and that preliminaries of peace (negotiated by an administration of which he himself was a part) should be actually signed

under the auspices of that very Empress of RUSSIA, the grand authoress of what he now calls ‘ jacobinical, revolutionary principles, violative of treaties, subversive of the law of nations, starting a code of new and monstrous maxims,’ and all the other strong abuse which, in the prodigality of his invectives, he has cast upon this new alliance, — a mere *fac-simile* of the old :—and after all what does this prove ? but that the honorable gentleman’s obloquies now are of just as much value as his encomiums last year upon the ‘ magnanimity’ of some of these very powers,—both the one and the other being mere noise, and signifying nothing.

“ However, sir, regarding the first formation of this confederacy in the year 1780 and 1781, the honorable gentleman says that this court, though too weak to resist it by force, never admitted the principle of that confederacy ; and that Lord STORMONT protested against it.

“ Here let me remark, that the opposition of that day, like this of the present, had their cant reproaches vented by the supporters of the one administration as well as the other. How could we be always right, they said, who always opposed the right and the wrong ?—or if we concurred, then it was ‘ a fit of candor.’ The truth, sir, is, that neither did we then, nor do we now, complain, but from a full conviction that we had just cause. Even the honorable gentleman has had our votes when we conscientiously felt that we could agree with him ; and, notwithstanding all the heat of party at the period of the American

war alluded to, not a breath of blame did we throw upon the ministers of those days for their discreet and measured conduct respecting the confederacy at that period formed by the neutral powers. In that 'fit of candor,' if such it was, the honorable gentleman himself was with us; but he is now quite sure that what he then thought good sense and good management was owing to *weakness*.—In nothing were the honorable gentleman and I (who then acted together) more of one mind, than in general censure of that administration; against their conduct, in this case, however, we murmured not one word: for, without conceding any necessary point, we thought their discretion, in that instance, saved this country from a war with the Northern powers; and our naval history from that period vouches that their caution did not sacrifice the sources of our maritime greatness, which, according to the honorable gentleman, must be the inevitable consequence. That government did not revolt the feelings of Europe by sending its fleets to a feeble power, to carry by force what it might obtain by argument; nor did it follow the example of capricious despotism in laying embargoes upon Danish and Swedish property in British ports. These improvements in diplomacy, these encouragements to commerce, have been reserved for the honorable gentleman.

" Now, with regard to the first of the three branches into which I have divided the heads of my argument, if any person is anxious for my opinion, I have no hesitation in saying, that, as a general proposition, ' free bottoms do *not* make free goods; ' and that, as an axiom, it is

supported neither by the law of nations nor of common sense. The law of nations is but a body of regulations, founded upon equal justice, and applying equally to all nations for the common interest of all. If a state of war did not involve its own inconveniences, the temptations to war would be endless, and might keep nations in perpetual misery. It is therefore for the general advantage that belligerents should feel the injuries of abridged and restricted trade, because it is an inducement to peace;—and if, on the other hand, the commerce of a power at war, as well as the materials of offence, could be legally carried on by a neutral, the benefit of maritime preponderance would be wholly lost—a thing as much at variance with common sense, as it would be repugnant to reason, that mere naval superiority should despise every rule of relative justice, and, by bare-faced power, make its own will the law of the ocean.

“ The only difficulty would be, which to condemn as most monstrous,—a neutral, pretending to the right of supplying one belligerent with all the means of mischief to another; or a belligerent, insisting upon an universal right of search in all cases, and making innocent commerce the sport of its whim, in express contempt of specific regulation. It is between these extremes that the general interest of the commonwealth of nations finds the true equitable medium; as the numberless treaties between the different states of Europe sufficiently demonstrate.

“ From these treaties the *most general* inference is, for the *general freedom* of commerce; but

every one of them contains exceptions to, and qualifications of, this principle; which, though general, is not universal.

“So much with regard to ‘free bottoms making free goods:’ which, however, is not the question at issue between this court and the neutral powers; because, if it were, it would exclude all consideration of the two other heads of this discussion; namely, ‘the contraband of war,’ (a point not disputed, as I understand, by the Northern powers) and ‘the right of search,’ which, under certain limitations, is expressly recognized.

“The contraband of war’ is the mere creature of convention; the very articles which are declared ‘contraband’ with one power being ‘innocent commerce’ with another. This point, thus varying and contradictory, the honorable gentleman would reduce into something wonderfully simple. Instead of resting it upon the specific text of a treaty, he would make it depend solely upon the will of the strongest. He knows far better than they who negotiated them, what the treaties meant. Thus, if naval materials were defined as lawful commerce, in some treaties, the honorable gentleman says they were not prohibited as contraband, *only because* the contracting nation at that time did not trade in such articles. So, too, if in the treaty with Holland of 1674 *, ‘hemp, flax, and pitch; ropes, sails, and anchors; masts, planks, boards, beams, of what sort of wood soever, and all other materials

* See Appendix, N° I.

for building or repairing ships,' are, in the very words of the treaty, declared to be '*wholly free goods, wares, and commodities*,' as expressly contradistinguished from contraband,—the honorable gentleman gives you two unanswerable reasons why you should hold these treaties as nothing in this discussion:—First, says he, because it was not *then* foreseen that *such things* could be implements of war. Secondly, or if it had been foreseen, the exclusion of such articles from '*contraband*,' in favour of the Dutch, does not affect the general principle, in as much as '*the Dutch* were likely to be always allies of this country, or at least friendly.' And the first of these powerful arguments he strengthens by a very fine hypothesis:—'Suppose,' adds the honorable gentleman, 'gunpowder had been invented subsequent to any treaty in which it was not declared to be contraband, what sort of a minister would he be who would admit a neutral power to assist his enemy with gunpowder, merely because it happened not to have been discovered when the contraband of war had been settled with such neutral?' Excellent illustration! Why, sir, in such a case we should have all said the same thing;—but how contemptible is it to imply the present to be *such a case*! What an honour to the close of the eighteenth century to have found out, not exactly the invention of gunpowder, but that '*hemp, pitch, ropes, sails, anchors, and masts*,' are *become* implements of war, which they were *not* in 1654 and 1674! What a miraculous talent of expounding treaties must not that honorable gentleman be gifted with, who would make those articles *contraband* to the rest

of the world which were declared *free* to the *Dutch*, because it was considered *certain*, in 1674, that the Dutch must be always allies or friends of England!—even the Dutch, who, within only twenty years before this treaty, waged three of the bloodiest wars with this country that it ever before sustained with any naval enemy! Are the names of *De Ruyter* and *Van Tromp* so forgotten, in 1674, that is to say two years after the cessation of war with Holland, that the hostility of their country to this may not be as likely as its friendship? And might not the glories of these celebrated men afford some distant guess, that ‘hemp, pitch, ropes, sails, anchors, and masts,’ were, in their life-time, implements of war?—Why, sir, can there be a clearer proof what the honorable gentleman thinks of this house, than his offering such an argument as this, in palliation of this new war, which his wantonness and want of the commonest discretion has brought upon the country?

“ From the words which I have quoted, you see that these concessions were made to Holland in the treaty of 1674. Nobody can be ignorant how that country availed itself of all its privileges, either of natural right or of treaty, during the Seven Years’ war, as well as during that which was terminated at *Aix-la-Chapelle*. Throughout these wars, Holland carried every neutral right to its utmost extent of exertion. Did all this exertion disable this country from crippling the marine of France during these contests? Did it? I ask the house:—and if this concession, to so industrious, active, and indefatigable a race as the Dutch, the general carriers of Europe, pro-

duced neither facilities to France, nor injury to us, let me ask you, if there be a prudent man on earth who would have provoked extremities with Russia, a power that has scarcely any carrying trade whatever, about a point which, in the hands of the Dutch, was absolutely nugatory as to all those dangers which the propensity to this war has discovered and magnified?

“ But the honorable gentleman flatters himself that he has found out something auspicious to his cause, in recollecting that I condemned, at the time of the French commercial treaty in 1787, your granting this very point to France. What a cause of triumph for the honorable gentleman! — That I censured, as most undoubtedly I did, the cession of a principle to a country which the experience of ages proved to be a kind of *natural enemy* in all your wars, — which you denied to one that scarcely ever was against you, and which every maxim of honest English policy should prompt you to cultivate as a sort of *natural friend*, — I dreaded not so much the direct as the indirect use that France might make of such a distinction in her favor; and I objected to and reprobated your yielding that to Lewis the XVI. which you peremptorily refused to Catharine the Second. If I understand what it is to be right and consistent, I was so in my discrimination upon this point, in that discussion; and I am ignorant of the meaning of the words, if the honorable gentleman’s animadversion this night be not as weak, trifling, and fallacious, as were his original arguments at the time he made this surrender.

“ So much then as to the *two first* branches of this question with the neutral powers.

“ With respect to the *third* point, the matter of ‘*search*’—*that*, under sound and discreet limitations is certainly a right of belligerents; but, pushed to extremity, it becomes, like many other rights, a gross wrong. The right of search, as on the one hand it does not rest merely on unwritten law, so neither on the other is it a matter to be arbitrarily exercised. The *thing*, as well as the *manner*, is defined by strict stipulation*. As to the claim of convoy, beyond all doubt, if the privilege of convoy were abused in protecting the trade of our enemy, *that* would be a very fit subject of representation. As far as we are acquainted with the precautions intended by the Northern powers, they seem to have been fully aware of such a possible fraud †; and there is nothing of this sort which, in my opinion, remonstrance and reason were not capable of settling. Even the presence of convoy would not prevent search, and justifiably too, in what the treaties call ‘cases of lawful suspicion’;—but, after all, your final satisfaction may as well depend upon the convoy as the ship’s documents. A sound discretion will be influenced by the nature of the case. It is not ‘*search upon lawful or urgent suspicion*,’ so well provided for in different treaties, that makes any part of the question; it is the unqualified assumption of an universal right to search in all possible cases, or, in other words, subjecting the commerce of the

* See Appendix, N° II. † Id. N° III.

world to wayward, vexatious, harassing, insulting interruptions and inquiries, without stint or distinction.—This is the grievance; and, to judge of its justice, I ask you, Would you endure such treatment yourselves from any state upon earth? Would you? There is no principle by which you can so well attain the knowledge of relative justice, as to put yourself into the place of *another*, and decide upon another by *yourself*. The extent of what you contend for would, if retaliated, lay at the discretion of any petty power, not only all the free course of your trade, but also the proud spirit and the high feeling which so naturally belong to your naval ascendency. Suppose the king of Spain at war with Algiers. If a case can be imagined more likely than another to reconcile you to this humiliation, it would be, I suppose, in favour of a Christian king of Spain, contending with pirates, and robbers, and infidel barbarians. A British fleet of merchantmen, in the lawful pursuits of trade, to your own islands, for instance, of Minorca or Malta, or destined to any other of the Mediterranean ports, though convoyed by a squadron of English men of war, would, according to these arguments, be liable to be stopped, ransacked, teased, and insulted, by the meanest cutter in the Spanish navy. Such would be the fate to which your own maxims would expose you, unless you frankly acknowledge that you have one measure for yourselves, and another for the rest of the world. Whatever the shifting gale of luck and fortune may suggest to feeble minds, be assured that justice is the best policy, and the soundest principle.

“ Notwithstanding all the phlegm with which the honorable gentleman has stigmatised the three maritime states in this Northern confederacy, not one word has he uttered, as my honorable friend (Mr. GREY) has well observed, against the King of Prussia, one of the most strenuous parties in this league.—If the genius of the honorable gentleman’s government were yet to be truly characterised, his conduct in respect to this prince puts it in the most glaring colours. Not only all the *wrong* that may, in the opinion of many people, clog the question, but that which is the very pith and marrow of the whole dispute, the honorable gentleman has, by the restoration of the capture in the Texel, given up to the king of Prussia. Why?—Because, safe from the attacks of the British navy, the King of Prussia has the means of injury in his turn. What does all this demonstrate, but that the honorable gentleman is ready to give up every thing to force, and nothing to reason. Instead of sparing the feeble, and pulling down the proud, he bows down to the mighty, and tramples upon the weak. With Denmark, vulnerable at all points, the Hon. Gentleman will not even confer, without a British fleet; but every thing is made a peace-offering to the King of Prussia*.

“ My honorable friend (Mr. GREY) has truly and wisely said, that he was not called upon to discuss the question in dispute as a general principle. Certainly not;—the bringing it to the present issue is the very perfection of impolicy. ‘What!’ answers the honorable gentleman (Mr.

* See Appendix, N° IV.

PITT) 'were we to give that up which Lord STORMONT protested against in the year 1780?' Who wanted him to give it up? Where lay the necessity of either admitting or rejecting it? A cautious, a discreet, and measured line of conduct had saved the question from public discussion, and Europe from this new war. The greatest naval success cannot obtain more real advantage for you than you might have derived from prudence—whilst failure, if you fail, would make your disgrace tenfold. Granting you all that you look to, from arms, are you a bit nearer to your end? Suppose you separate Denmark from this confederacy—Humbled to the earth, admitting that she apologise for her conduct, is the pretension, therefore, at rest for ever? Do what you will, the claim will not be extinguished by the submission, but will revive with the means of enforcing it *.

"Upon the whole of this business, what is the obvious inference, but that those who fancy some strange interest in this dreadful trade of war—seeing jacobinism, and all their other pretexts for its duration, grown stale and disgusting—have manœuvred to associate with the national enthusiasm in favor of its navy, a point in which its real interests are but little involved; have endeavoured to draw from the public predilection for that service, so natural and so well deserved, perhaps the means of advancing some new plan or speculation no way connected, as upon former occasions, with the professed object. Foes or neutrals, what is so probable or so plausible to be urged, by jacobins and others, as that these

* See Appendix, N° V.

honorable gentlemen, who have no character for pacification, and have yet just as much as their conduct merits, have fallen, as it were, upon this lucky question in good time to rouse the expiring energies of the country into new offers of lives and fortunes, for an object that may seem nearer and dearer to them than the further prolongation of the war with France—the great success of which its late conductor has, this night, so minutely detailed to you.

“ Now, sir, let us proceed to consider this success.

“ The honorable gentleman (Mr. DUNDAS) resists this motion, this night, in a way which, though not wholly new from the same quarter, brings, with every repetition of the same argument, some fresh cause for astonishment.

“ The alledged ‘that this war has been successful’ is not made now by that honorable gentleman; for the first time, it is true; but then his recurrence to former, I will not say ‘exploded,’ but too frequently urged, and as frequently refuted, reasonings, is compensated by something quite untouched in past discussions. It now seems that this war was undertaken for the purpose of ‘conquering the colonies and destroying the commerce of France.’ The restoration of monarchy—the overthrow of jacobin principles—the abasement of France, and confining her to her ancient limits—the balance of power—the cause of law, order, and religion—all these are gone by; and the splendid

reveries, that were soothed by such contemplations, are fallen, alas! and sunk down to the capture of ships and of tropical settlements. In this view of things the honorable gentleman ventures to compare the success of the present with that of the Seven Years' war, and finds great consolation in discovering, that even in that glorious contention there had been some reverses—alluding particularly to *Minorca* and to *Rochefort*. With some portion of triumph he refers to these misfortunes, and applies his discovery, in rather a singular manner, as an argument to the present question; for he gives you this piece of history as a reason *against* going into any enquiry regarding the failures of the present war.

“ Most unfortunately for the honorable gentleman, the very misfortunes to which he has adverted were instantly followed by enquiries in this house. It has been reserved for the present war, though the most disgraceful in its external, and the most wretched in its domestic consequences, of any that this country ever waged, to be the *only war* in which this house never saw *any* grounds for retrospect or revision. All the collected calamities of all their predecessors, for ages, do not equal, either in kind or number, the exploits, during the present war, of the administration just retired from office; yet they are *the only men* ever possessed of the powers of government in this country, who never, even in a single instance, yielded to any enquiry, upon any part of the innumerable and varied disgraces that have marked the last nine years.—So unlucky is the honorable gentleman in the case of Mi-

norca, that every thing respecting that business makes directly against him. To whatever cause the loss of that island may be attributable, this house immediately enquired into the cause. A person for whose memory I have the deepest gratitude and love *, then one of the king's ministers, far from resisting, as the honorable gentleman resists, was the most eager in *insisting upon* enquiry. Unlike the present times, the House of Commons, then, had not been tutored into that confidence in ministers which distinguishes later periods; and the parliamentary enquiries that followed the failures to which the honorable gentleman alluded, so far from embarrassing the operations of government, or unnerving the martial energies of the country, (these stale objections to the approved and happy practice of our ancestors) were succeeded by a series of unexampled renown. Such is the honorable gentleman's luck, in his historical references !

“ Not one word that I have ever uttered, or that ever came out of the lips of any friend of mine at this side of the house, has tended, even in the most distant degree, to slur or under-rate the achievements of our fleets: and I will leave the house to judge whether any persons, in it or out of it, have dwelt with more rapture upon the triumphs of that branch of the service than we have.—From this, however, the honorable gentleman strives to draw a defence of a nature truly singular. He endeavours to intermingle with the glories of the navy the absurdities of his own expeditions; and asks, ‘ how the mili-

* Lord Holland was Secretary of State in 1755.

tary plans can be all folly, and the naval all wisdom, both being advised by the same heads?"

—The question answers itself. It is in the nature of naval tactics, that a great deal depends upon the officers and men, upon winds and weather;—in land operations a good plan is almost every thing. Yet the merit of the Admiralty is indisputable. It is true there are parts of the administration, of Lord SPENCER (for whom my personal respect is considerable) not free from blame, particularly what related to the invasions of Ireland; but where the general system has been judicious and prosperous, it would be invidious to dwell upon a few errors. The honorable gentleman would incorporate these two services; and is ready to take his share in the blame of the Admiralty, generously commuting the glories of his own department for their miscarriages. Sir, every presumption is in favor of the Admiralty: every proof against him. Nobody asks about the merit of the Admiralty. It speaks for itself;—and equally obvious is the true character of the honorable gentleman's department. If all his expeditions have been marked by discomfiture and disgrace; if the failure of some is aggravated by circumstances too painful to touch upon; if such armies, with the courage they are known to possess, have produced only such effects,—the result is infallible. It is but to name the enterprises,—and the information, the skill, the vigor, and the ability of those who planned them, are as plain as demonstration could make them. No man will ever enquire about the wisdom that projected the expeditions to *Quiberon*, to *Flan-*

ders, to St. Domingo, to Holland, to Ferrol, to Cadiz, &c. These things are past all curiosity.

“ The honorable gentleman has another way of reconciling this house to his disasters. With a precision that is quite ludicrous, and a gravity of face which, unless he were quite certain of his audience, would excite a suspicion that he was mocking the house, he gives us the dates, to an hour, of the days on which his expeditions failed, when they landed, retreated, or capitulated: sometimes it is the wind, and sometimes the rain, and sometimes the frost, the snow, the cold, the heat; now it is too early, and then it is too late:—and to this notable narrative the house listens, without once saying ‘ tell us of a single military enterprize in which you have succeeded? and if you cannot, give us some better reason than your own words to believe that you are blameless. Let us enquire into the facts, and judge for ourselves.’ The honorable gentleman, with this mass of defeats before his eyes, has the hardihood to talk of the success of this war; and thinks the enumeration of islands and settlements, and a schedule of captured ships and frigates, will blind the eyes and confound the understandings of men, so as to be diverted from the only proper consideration, the only rational test of comparative success, namely, *the relative situation of the two countries*, (of which a word by-and-by) *in point of power*. This is the true criterion of success, even without recurring to all the former motives to this war—restoring monarchy, and putting down atheism and jacobinism, and God knows what.

“ Of the word *diversion*, the honorable gentleman gives us indeed a very curious illustration.

“ Up to this moment, I believe no man ever understood any thing else by ‘military diversion’ but the drawing off, by means of a few, a larger number of your enemy, who might hurt you more in another quarter. The expedition to Holland, he tells us, had three objects in view,—the capture of the fleet—giving the Dutch an opportunity of shaking off the yoke of France—and making a diversion for our allies in Italy and on the Rhine. He asks, ‘Is it nothing to have ten ships of the line added to our own navy, which else would be at this moment a means of annoying us in the hands of our enemy?’ Sir, in this, as in every other instance, the English navy did the duty assigned to it nobly; and if the capture of the Dutch fleet was a primary object of that memorable expedition, *that object* was accomplished without any necessity of hazarding any land experiments, under the honorable gentleman’s auspices;—for, in point of fact, the fleet revolted and surrendered before the landing on the *Helder-Point*.

“ With respect to the second object, namely, ‘giving the Dutch an opportunity of shaking off the yoke of France,’ how the Dutch felt and feel at this hour, with what horror they received your proffered release from their bondage, and the execration with which they load your name, it is unnecessary to state. But in the third and grand point, that of a diversion in favor of our allies, *there* we did wonders.

“ If Europe were searched, not a place could be found so well calculated, for enabling a smaller to combat a larger army, as this selected spot. To this fatal neck of land did that honorable gentleman devote thirty thousand British soldiers, and (whilst, aggravated by the derision of Europe, this country had the mortification of seeing a British army purchase its escape from an army much inferior to itself, by the delivering up of eight thousand picked seamen) so signal was the benefit to our allies of this precious diversion, that, about the very time that the English army was making that respectable retreat, the grand armies of our allies, under *Hotze* and *Swarrow*, were broken, beaten, dispersed, and routed, never more to rally or unite.

“ Such was the honorable gentleman’s *diversion* in Holland!—such its effects!

“ But his unconquered mind was not yet subdued enough from military expeditions. He proposed new sources of renown for those armies whose happy destiny it was to be at his disposal. Because he failed in the north, he was certain of success in the south; and, sure enough, he dispatches a formidable force under Sir RALPH ABERCROMBIE, not as ‘ *a diversion!* ’ no,—this body was destined to co-operate *directly* with the Austrians in Italy. This armament, delayed, until any man of common sense must have seen its total inutility towards its professed object, arrives at Genoa, just in time—for what? to assist General MELAS? No,—but just in time to have the earliest intelligence of his total ruin. It sails into the road of *Genoa*, to sail out again, and

escapes into the Mediterranean at the very time the Austrian garrison in that capital passes out to meet their defeated countrymen in the northernmost parts of Italy. But was this co-operation desired by the Austrians? No such wish is expressed or felt. The honorable gentleman plainly enough lets us understand the direct contrary. And was it thus that British armies were accustomed to be treated in former wars? Was it in this way that Prince EUGENE acted to the Duke of MARLBOROUGH? What then is the fact? but that the hitherto untarnished reputation of our arms has so suffered under the baneful mismanagement of his majesty's late ministers, that the co-operation of *twenty thousand Englishmen* is so slighted by our allies, that they deprecated their aid, resolved to touch nothing belonging to us—but our guineas.

“ Now, sir, as to the *delay* of this expedition to Italy, let me implore the attention of the house to the honorable gentleman's defence.

“ With the same admirable minuteness, as to days and dates, he tells you that this grand scheme was determined on the 22d of February. On the 23d, he told it to the king. On the 24th he told it to the duke. On the 28th the duke told him something. The honorable gentleman then reads two letters, the one from Sir CHARLES STEWART, the other from the Duke of YORK, in support of this part of his defence.—I have been called a new member this night; and new and raw indeed must I be, and wholly ignorant of the practice of this house, if I could hear, without reprobation, that which would have been

scouted and spurned in the good times of the English constitution,—when a spirit of just jealousy of its rights, and a proper sense of its independence, prevailed in this House, instead of a blind confidence in the executive government. In such times, no minister would have *dared* to have read to the House of Commons of England the garbled extracts, just as suited his own purpose, of letters from general-officers, as an excuse for miscarriages, affecting in the nearest and dearest sense the honour and interests of the country. It is true that I have not been, for some time, in habits of intercourse with the illustrious person who is at the head of the army; but greatly indeed must he be changed from what I knew him, if he would not mark with his abhorrence this style of palliation. For what is it? and what does it prove?—that, if there were nothing more than we have heard, his Royal Highness ought to be instantly impeached. The national defence of England—its militia, is cut up by the roots; the general body of its officers is disgusted by the laws past in 1799, which transferred to the line so large a proportion of its best disciplined men. These men, leaving the militia a mere skeleton, are incorporated with regular regiments, and embarked for *Holland*; and, seven months after their first embarkation to, and five months after their return from, that disastrous enterprize, their commander-in-chief informs the executive government, if we are to believe the honorable gentleman, ‘that it will take full two months to discipline them into fitness for actual service! ’

“ Was there ever before such a defence as this, hazarded before an assembly of rational men ?

“ Those troops which, at the expense of the national militia of this country, were boasted as most excellent in the summer, are declared, in the beginning of the next spring, to be good for nothing, without, at the least, ‘ two months’ drilling and forming. They were, it seems, in the completest state possible for the field in August ; —but in the following February, even their leader, if we are to believe the war minister, describes them as wholly useless, unless they have such a length of time allowed them to be perfected in their exercises as defeated whatever hopes the redoubtable project to the Mediterranean might excite. To all this, the honorable gentleman adds, That the weather was too wet for field-days, and, when not wet, was very cold—the men had not even an opportunity of knowing their officers.

“ Some little advantage of climate France possesses over this country ;—but never sure did any analyzer of atmospheres conceive that the very weather which, in the one country, prevented soldiers from peeping out of their quarters, enabled the other to collect and to create, from raw recruits, a perfect army, and to carry this army, so created, over these mighty barriers, the passage of which was one of the wonders of the ancient, and one of the doubts of the modern world. It was in that very weather, at the remembrance of which the honorable gentleman shivers, that **BONAPARTE**—but not until he had almost prostrated himself, in his soli-

citations for peace, before the infatuated rulers of the unhappy nations at war with France—then it was, even in that weather, that this extraordinary man assembled and animated the youth of France. He found good weather for field-days, and had time enough so to drill and discipline his new-raised corps, as to break to pieces the veteran legions of Austria, and in one day to recover *all* the conquests of two successful campaigns.

“ But had the honorable gentleman’s expedition been able to sail sooner :—‘ If the battle of Marengo had not been lost :—‘ *But*’—‘ *If*’—Why, sir, I do not know what degree of fortune there may be in this battle, or in that battle ; but I believe the honorable gentleman never was more mistaken than he would find himself, even in the event of BONAPARTE’s defeat at Marengo. Such were the precautions of that fruitful mind ; so well did he arrange his measures ; so little did he, in truth, trust to mere fortune, that if, against all probability, Marengo ‘ *had* been lost,’ that mighty genius had so formed and disposed his resources, that many and many a bloody battle must have been gained by his enemies before they could have made much impression upon the incomparable system of his operations in Italy last summer.

“ I defy imbecillity itself to string together a more motley pack of excuses than the honorable gentleman has laid before the house this night. *Amsterdam had been taken, if Sir RALPH ABERCROMBIE had landed on the 16th instead of the 27th of August.*—Sir CHARLES STUART’s dislike to the

Russians protracted Sir RALPH's departure for the Mediterranean.—Ten thousand Irish militia were to come to England, and ten thousand English to go to Ireland.—Some of the troops wanted their new coats—some their arms.—One expedition sailed on the 8th of April, took shelter on the 13th, and resailed on the 24th.—It was designed to assist the Austrians, but the Austrians would not be assisted.—There was no plan or concert between the two courts.—An account current with the Seven Years' war; took more ships than Lord CHATHAM, and more islands.—St. Domingo was unhealthy and rather expensive; but it was a good market.—This war has opened worlds of new markets.—Returns, even to a man, of the new-raised corps at Gibraltar, Minorca, Malta, Portugal; and the total of your force, now and in 1797, with a most comfortable exactness.—The history of England from 1755 to 1762—from Severndroog to the Havannah;—In a word, such a series of insulting puerilities as no house of parliament was, ever before, entertained with, under the name of a defence.

So much, for the present, of the late secretary; and now to proceed to another view of the success of this war.

“ The late Chancellor of the Exchequer tells us, that he forbears going over the military exploits, *only because* his honorable friend (Mr. DUNDAS) has put those things in the clearest light. He is *equally positive* as to ‘ the success of the war;’ but, not to usurp upon his truly fortunate colleague, he has his own peculiar instances to detail of prosperity, of comfort, and of multiplied happiness—all flowing in upon the country from his own more immediate department.

“ Quite scandalised at my honorable friend’s statement of the magnitude of the national debt in consequence of this war, the honorable gentleman *pares down* its amount since 1793 to the trifle of **ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY MILLIONS**: and how?—by a mode surprisingly curious indeed. First, he cuts out the fifty-six millions, for which the income-tax is mortgaged; and next, he desires you to forget all that the sale of the land-tax has already purchased, or may yet redeem. Alas, sir! there is not a gentleman in this house who would rejoice more than I, that the income-tax was to be set down for nothing; and I cannot help admiring that frontless insensibility under which the honorable gentleman passes over a grinding impost that has ripped open the private concerns, and reduced the necessary comforts, of every man in England. The extinction of debt from the sale of the land-tax carries its own evil in its tail; and we might as well rejoice at our prosperity from that measure, as a private man would from paying his debts by bringing his estate to the hammer. The debts in so far may be paid; but *the estate* is gone for ever. The honorable gentleman must think his audience are children, when he attempts to cajole them by such a play upon words.

“ In reality, what is the state of the country upon this point?

“ From such a population as that of Great Britain, near forty millions sterling are annually wrung: to this add ten millions more for the poor-rates, making together about fifty millions. The honorable gentleman has estimated the land-

ed rental of England at twenty-five millions. Thus then, we pay, yearly, double the produce of the whole rental of the country, in rates and taxes; a sum approaching very near the whole income of the country, taking the income-tax as the barometer of its amount. Was any nation ever before in such circumstances? If nothing else were stated but this undisputed fact, is it not, of itself, a crying reason for inquiry? Will the honorable gentleman tell us of any people that were (not in degree merely, but in kind or principle) in such a state, since the beginning of the world? As to the sinking fund, let it be always remembered that its effects, highly beneficial as they are, must depend upon the revenue *keeping its level*. If the revenue fails, the charm of the sinking fund vanishes into nothing. This, sir, is the true picture of our financial condition *as a state*; and the condition of *the people* is strictly answerable to it. One sixth of all the souls in England is supported by charity; and the plight of a great proportion of those who contribute to their maintenance is but little better than that of the paupers whom they succour. How the hon. gentleman has nerves to sustain him in venturing to talk of the happiness of this country, would be incomprehensible, if our long experience of him had not convinced us of the fondness with which he can survey every act of his own. The repetition of his delusions, deludes even himself. He has indulged so much in these fallacious and fatal reveries, that he appears to have become his own bubble, and almost to mistake for realities the phantasmas of his bewildered wits. Let him ask any of the members from Yorkshire and Lancashire, what the state is of

the manufacturers in those counties; even those (looking at Mr. WILBERFORCE) of whom I may not think the best, will not venture to deny the starving, distracted condition of those great and populous districts. From them, he may receive an emphatical and decisive contradiction to his distempered and pernicious fancies.

“ These, sir, are some of the internal effects of this war, which both the honorable gentlemen (Messrs. PITT and DUNDAS) venture to compare with former contentions against France. We have taken more, they tell us, than even in the seven years war, and therefore this surpasses *that* in success. Good God, sir, what an effect does a confidence in the votes of this house produce upon the understandings of men of abilities !

“ To talk of *this war*, and that of the seven years !! ‘ We have destroyed the commerce of France—we have taken their islands,’ say you—But these, I say, were not the objects of the war. If you have destroyed the commerce of France, you have destroyed it at the expense of near three hundred millions of debt. If you have taken the French islands, you have made a bootless capture; for you are ready enough to restore them as the price of peace. You have taken islands—but you have, at the same time, laid the house of Austria prostrate at the feet of triumphant France. Have you restored monarchy?—Its very hopes are intombed for ever. Have you destroyed jacobinism as you call it?—Your resistance has made it stronger than ever. Have you reduced the power of France?—France is aggrandized beyond the wildest dreams

of former ambition. Have you driven her within her ancient frontiers?—She has enlarged herself to the Rhine, and to the Alps; and added five millions to her population in the centre of Europe. You had all the great states of Europe for your allies against France—what is become of them? All that you have not *ruined*, are your *determined enemies*. Where are the neutral powers? Every one of them leagued with this very France for your destruction. Could all this be chance? —No, sir, it is the true succession of effect to cause. It is the legitimate issue of your own system. You began in foolishness, and you end in mischief. Tell me one single object of the war that you have obtained. Tell me one evil that you have not brought upon your country. Yet this house will not inquire. The honorable gentleman (Mr. DUNDAS) says ‘We have had more difficulties to encounter than any former government; for we had constantly thwarting us the implacable monster, Jacobinism.’ Sir, jacobinism has, in it, no property, so sure, as the honorable gentleman’s system, to propagate and confirm it. That system has given to jacobinism life and nutriment, strength and maturity, which it could not have derived from any other course. Bent upon crushing every idea of any reform, they resolved to stifle the once free genius of the English mind, and suspend some of the most valuable parts of the English constitution, rather than yield one jot. Hence their administration is marked, in *this country*, by a succession of infringements upon the dearest rights of the people—by invasions and rebellions in another country. The parent source of all these disorders is that baneful impolicy, in which both the honorable gen-

lemen endeavour to implicate this house. ‘All that we have done,’ says the honorable gentleman (Mr. DUNDAS), who, to be sure, is more a man of things, than words, ‘has been approved by *all*, except a miserable *remnant** of this house,’ (an expression which he uses, I presume, to show, that though an act of parliament may incorporate legislatures, it cannot unite languages;) and the

* I wish I may prevail upon my reader to procure Mr. Dundas’s speech, published by Mr. Rivington; a speech which, I assure him, suffers nothing in the report: and is, so far, alas! very unlike to this which he is now perusing. That version of Mr. Dundas’s arguments most accurately omits the passage to which the above part of Mr. Fox’s speech refers; and it is not so much to blame the good taste of the retrenchment (if any discretion is allowable in such cases) that I make the observation, as to guard against mistake, and prevent the reader’s imagining that Mr. Fox was, in this part of the text, combating, not nonsense, but, inanity.

Indeed, far from censuring Mr. Dundas for a practice which Demosthenes, and Tully, and Mirabeau, and Burke, have sanctioned by their example, I wish I could commend, for any thing like similar anxiety, the person whose reasonings I am endeavouring to convey to the country upon a subject of such interest to its welfare; but of Mr. Fox this is an almost singular certainty: not only that he never published any of his speeches, but never lent the least assistance to any body who engaged to do so, nor has at any time seen, either in manuscript or print, one syllable that ever fell from his lips till it was before the world.

Against any publications of parliamentary speeches there are undoubtedly authorities; but never yet has the writer heard one sound argument to shew that a faithful transcript *without*, of the transactions *within* parliament, is not a great national advantage. Those who, aiming at all possible accuracy, give the debates to the public, in my opinion, are public benefactors; and what their labour must be who professionally report them, I can feebly imagine, even from this sample: though I have had more weeks to accomplish it, than they often have hours to render a whole night’s speaking.

other gentleman is so anxious to establish the popularity of his system, that he almost reproaches the house with coldness, in their support of him. He complains that only '*seven eighths*' of the members of this house were for his measures, when he had '*nine tenths*' of the people. .

" If this were true of the people, they would almost deserve their present fate;—but the drift of all this is obvious enough. This identification of himself with the house; this laborious shifting, as it were, of the honorable gentleman's own responsibility upon their votes, is very intelligible; and he falls into that classical correctness which I have before noticed in his honorable friend, in his great zeal to make that point clear. Though he has had three parliaments, chosen, one would have thought, pretty well to his taste, he asserts that even the majorities of this house could not *come up* to the tone of the public, in favour of his measures, which, he says (thinking, however, with his honorable friend, that our opposition was, at the same time, an advantage to him), had the sanction of all, but a few '*exploded opinions*' in this house.

" *Exploded opinions*," then, he defines to be, opinions which this house negatives by its majorities. The honorable gentleman must allow me to inform him, that his great and justly revered father spent the greater part of his life in the enforcement of such '*exploded opinions*.' I must remind him, that he himself (who has since found such effectual means of giving currency to his sentiments) was for some time tainted

with such ‘exploded opinions.’ ‘Exploded opinions’ have distinguished many of the wisest and the best men this nation ever produced; and though I lament the sufferings of my country from the neglect of those opinions, I assure the honorable gentleman, and this house, that there is nothing on which I should so steadily rely for the regard of good men, living, or of posterity, when in my grave, as those very opinions which the votes of this house have enabled the honorable gentleman to stigmatize as ‘exploded.’

“ In point of fact, however, the honorable gentleman, still surveying himself in the flattery of his own mirror, is wholly mistaken about these ‘exploded opinions.’ It was to these ‘exploded opinions’ that the negotiations of Paris and Lille are attributable. We gave strong reasons in this house for peace. The public thought with us: and we have his own words, that he entered upon that treaty only in compliance with what he now calls ‘exploded opinions.’

“ But the honorable gentleman has a keen anxiety, lest this house should not continue to think these opinions quite so ‘exploded;’ for he asks, ‘ Will this house, by going into the proposed inquiry, disgrace its former votes?’ To which I answer, ‘ Yes, certainly, if this house will save the country.’ In the very house of commons, to which I before alluded, the early scene of the honorable gentleman’s ‘exploded opinions’—this very stimulus to pride was urged, though without effect. *That* house, as well as *this* house, was questioned, ‘ Will you, the uniform supporters of this war against America, dis-

grace your former votes?' But, sir, they *did* disgrace their former votes; and, by so doing, they did honor to themselves, and saved their country. That parliament was a retracting and a recanting parliament. Bitter as it was, the draught was swallowed; and I have no hesitation in saying, that this house, to rescue this country, if that indeed be possible, from the perils in which that honorable gentleman has involved it, must tread in the footsteps of its predecessor in 1782—and, by renouncing the honorable gentleman and his system together, preserve this country from its impending dangers.

“ Let it be observed, by the way, that the good acceptance of the honorable gentleman’s opinions in this house, happens to have been supported by the subsidiary aid of all the power of this government. Possessed of that *little* adjunct, he may double or treble the national debt, but he may be pretty sure, that his opinions will have a tolerable reception here. To escape the odium of being ‘exploded,’ he may be certain there is no remedy so effectual as his resuming his former office, or showing a perfect obsequiousness to those who are armed with its influence.

“ Now, sir, I come to the consideration of the late change of administration.

“ Before I touch upon the others, allow me to say, that with respect to *one* of them, I do not think it would be easy, if possible, to find a man in the whole community better suited to, or more capable of, the high office he fills, than the distinguished person at the head of the admiralty:

I mean of course, and can mean no other than, the Earl of ST. VINCENT ;—but beyond him, I own, I do not feel myself able to say one word that can be very agreeable to any individual of all the remainder.

“As to the mere *change*, it is true that no change can be for the worse ; for I defy the evil genius of the country to pick out an equal number of men from any part of England, whose measures could, in the same length of time, reduce the country to a more deplorable state than that in which the retired ministers have left it. But was there no alternative for the country between them and their exact successors ? I feel this to be a very unpleasant part of this night’s unavoidable discussion :—in matters of importance, however, delicacy must give place to duty. The late chancellor of the exchequer, not perhaps quite freely from redundancy, has blended, with his panegyric of the honorable gentleman over against me (Mr. ADDINGTON), a gaudy picture of the importance of the chair which you, sir, occupy. I agree that the office of speaker is a high and honorable station. It is certainly the first dignity in this house ; and I suppose it was merely for the public good, that both your predecessors descended from that altitude to *inferior places*, but happening to be, at the same time, situations of infinitely more emolument and power. A man, however, may be an excellent chairman of this house, as the late speaker undoubtedly was, without being exactly qualified for the office of chancellor of the exchequer. At the present moment this is all that I think necessary to say regarding the respectable and

honorable gentleman whom you, sir, have succeeded.

“ The next in importance, both of office and character, is the noble lord upon the opposite bench (Lord HAWKESBURY), who has richly shared those florid praises the honorable gentleman (Mr. PITTE) has poured so fluently upon the whole body of his successors. I assure the noble lord that I have as much respect for him as I can have for any person, whom I, personally, know so little. He has been, it is true, as the honorable gentleman has said, a member of this house for many years, and, I doubt not, a very diligent member;—but if you had polled the country, not an individual could be found in it less happily selected for the peculiar department he occupies, than the noble lord;—the noble lord who, in whatever else he may surpass them, does not yield even to any one of those whom he officially succeeds in the virulence of his obloquies upon the French revolution; who has spent as many hours in this house as any member of the late or present ministry, in showing the irredeemable infamy of treating with ‘ that republic of regicides and assassins.’ Never, sure, was there a worse calculated proposer of peace to Paris, than the very noble lord who was for cutting the matter quite short, and marching *off hand* to that capital.

“ What then is this country to expect?—a change of system? No: for all that the public have learnt upon this subject is this, that the new ministers are come in, distinctly and expressly to support the system of the former; with this

single exception (which makes any hope of establishing the tranquillity of the country recently united to us, wholly desperate), that they are hostile to the only measure of their predecessors which has any pretension to wisdom and good policy.

“ Before I proceed to the conclusion of this part of my subject, I must beg leave to say something upon this much-talked of subject of **CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION**.

“ As to the mere word ‘emancipation,’ I agree with the honorable gentleman (Mr. **PITT**), that the expression is not the best adapted to the case. It is not ‘emancipation,’ in the ordinary meaning of the term, that the Catholic wants, or that the government can grant; it is the removal of the civil disabilities that remain, and that remain for no end of either security, of policy, or of prudence—insulting and vexatious distinctions, beneficial to no interest whatever—but the fruitful source of jealousy, discord, and national weakness. The honorable gentleman talks of the king’s reign having been a series of concessions to the Catholics:—the king’s reign is marked by no concessions which the blameless conduct of the Catholics was not calculated to exact from the most unwilling government in the world. He talks of what has been given to the Catholics:—Sir, you give them nothing while you deprive them of a right to sit in this house. I know of no political rights which ought not to be common to all the king’s subjects, and I am sure that a system of proscription, on account of

theological differences, will for ever be found not more unjust and absurd, than pernicious. If this principle needed illustration, Ireland affords it beyond the power of controversy. Divided by the government, it presents a constant temptation to your enemy. Rebellion is the fruit of bad policy, and invasion is encouraged by disunion.

“ In mentioning the name of Lord FITZWILLIAM (so strangely quoted by an honorable gentleman as having contributed to the misfortunes of Ireland by his proposal regarding the Catholics), though I am eager to avow my partialities for that noble person, it is not from private friendship or personal regards that I call upon any really candid man, to deny, if he is able, upon his honor and conscience, that the system introduced by that noble lord would not, if then adopted, have prevented those dreadful scenes of havoc, murder, and devastation, which have since desolated that wretched country. Let it for ever be remembered, that (with all the industry which has been employed in making up the reports of the Irish lords and commons upon these subjects) not a vestige of evidence appears, but the direct contrary, that any approach was made to seek assistance from France, or that even the most distant idea of separation from, or setting up for independence of this country, was entertained in Ireland, until every petition for peaceful redress of grievances was spurned and rejected.

“ But, sir, this concession, to which a few years since (when, in my full belief, it would have prevented all the calamities that have since

happened) the honorable gentleman was so determined an enemy, and of which he is now, it seems, a martyr, was to have been, in his hands, accompanied with God knows what guards and qualifications. The apprehensions, I think all such wholly chimerical— But no matter — Whatever apprehensions to church or state the fearful or the zealous might entertain, to the grant of this Catholic claim, were all to be composed and done away, by the healing, wholesome, tranquillizing plan of the honorable gentleman; and after raising our expectation to the highest pitch in favor of this choice scheme, this choice scheme, he tells us, must be locked up in his own breast.

“ Now, that the honorable gentleman should not impart his project to us, at this side, whose dislike to it he anticipates, is nothing ;—but, that he should resolve to keep *this house*, and *the public*, in total ignorance of this most wise and perfect system, is utterly unaccountable. The honorable gentleman’s steady determination, to hide from the world this piece of excellence, reminds me of a saying of Mr. BURKE, who, in his fine strain of ridicule, observed, that if torture were ever to be justified, it was when a man refused to reveal what he asserted would be a mighty benefit to mankind. Torture had of late been liberally applied to extort the confession of evil ; and, if one could give the honorable gentleman credit for the just grounds of his egotism, it would almost tempt a wish, that he were *compelled* to disclose this blessed secret. So obdurate is he upon this point, that he not only fears his lips against such a happy disclosure, and proclaims his determina-

nation not to introduce, in his own person, any question upon this subject, but he absolutely forbids the house from discussing it, by declaring, that such discussion will not be *useless* merely, but *mischievous*. It is not, however, to this part of the business alone that the honorable gentleman's mysteries are confined; every thing connected with it is to be shrouded in silence and concealment. After avowing very fairly, so far, (though not the direct composition) the sense and spirit of the paper diffused through Ireland in his name; and after owning that his inability to propose his Catholic regulations, as a *minister*, was alone the cause of his resigning his office,—the honorable gentleman protests against further explanation. ‘No further avowal or denial shall be drawn from him either now or hereafter.’ This sure is the most extraordinary declaration that ever fell from the lips of a public man. The honorable gentleman resigns his office because he cannot propose his measure. To Ireland he sends his sentiments, as they are conveyed by a friend of his, in the paper alluded to. He describes his plan to this house as the perfection of all wisdom; and upon all these points he defies interrogatory, and deprecates comment.

“ The honorable gentleman asks—‘ Is it wonderful that the sovereign should have an opinion? No certainly;—and if the honorable gentleman did not make himself acquainted with his sovereign's opinion, upon this point, long before the proposed introduction of his meditated system, he was guilty of a breach of duty. In what possible way can the honorable gentleman be exonerated from the charge of gross irrever-

rence to the king, or of abusing so many millions of his people? He denies that any positive pledge was given to the Catholics at the union; but admits that it was natural for them to cherish expectation from it. Natural!—Why, unless they reasoned very deeply indeed upon the honorable gentleman's mind, such an expectation was inevitable. In the nature of things they must have looked upon it as a certainty.

“I shall say nothing of the *other* means employed to accomplish the union;—but, in respect to the operation of the Catholic question upon that measure, I can easily conceive that if any friend of the Catholics, supposing my relation the *Duke of Leinster*, or any other person well affected to their cause, or any of the leading Catholics themselves, should have been consulted by the honorable gentleman, what can be so likely as that the honorable gentleman should hint in private, what he has so distinctly stated in public, namely, that the shortest, surest course to the attainment of their objects would be, their support of that measure, from the adoption of which, *alone*, those concessions could flow which were so often refused by provincial prejudice, ignorance, and injustice. Upon the other hand, I cannot perceive any thing more probable than that the reluctance of those early enemies to the union, who are, at the same time, such infuriated terrorists in favor of Protestant ascendancy, had been subdued by assurances that an Imperial Parliament alone *could* raise a barrier sufficiently powerful to beat back the claims of the Catholics, so often, and so likely to be often preferred in the parliament of that country. It appears to me that nothing could

be at once more likely, and more like a pledge, than all this, when those public declarations of the honorable gentleman are remembered, which left no reserve upon this—that for either giving or rejecting the Catholic claim, the justice to feel it, the liberality to grant it, and the strength to secure it to the one sect, without mischief to the other, could be expected in a general parliament of the Empire—and in that alone.

“ That both parties in Ireland are discontented and disgusted cannot be otherwise than too true. To the Protestant zealot there is no security, or satisfaction to the Catholic claimant. Such is the honorable gentleman’s infelicity upon this great question, that the measure which was to be the remedy becomes the source of all distempers. Instead of quieting, he has agitated every heart in that country. The epoch from which was to begin the reign of comfort and confidence, of peace and equity and justice, is marked even in its outset, by the establishment of that which rests every civil blessing upon the caprice of power. Ill-starr’d race ! to whom this vaunted union was to be the harbinger of all happiness ; and of which the first fruit is martial law,—or, in other words, the extinguishment of all law whatsoever !

“ The situation of the king and of this house, upon the subject, is quite unexampled. His majesty’s prerogative is clear and undoubted to change his servants, to give or to refuse his assent to every law ; but it is a gross breach of the privileges of this house, and a deep violation of the constitution, to use the king’s name for the purpose of influencing its deliberations. Here

is not only an introduction of the king's name, but a declared incapacity to propose a salutary system on account of objections which the constitution of the country, and the undoubted rights of this house, will not allow to be even mentioned or hinted at. Sir, I respect the monarchical part of this Government; but the monarch has nothing to do with the sentiments of a member of parliament: and for the wonders of these times was reserved a public declaration within these walls coming from high authority, — that a plan of acknowledged benefit cannot be proposed here, unless it comes recommended from the crown, of which, by the constitution of the country, it should be the peculiar genius of this house to be wholly independent!

“ This sure is a strange state of things; and every thing connected with it is of the same character. As *a right*, the honorable gentleman denies the claim of the Catholics. He would give them nothing as a right—but he thinks the concession *expedient*. This, sir, is not *my* sense of the Catholic claim. I would grant it, not merely because it is expedient, but because it is just. Those who press the doctrine of virtual representation, to the utmost lengths, never ventured to carry it so far as even to pretend that it extended to the privation of the Catholic body. Catholics, in my opinion, have rights as well as Protestants. They have both rights conjointly; not resting upon light or frail grounds, but forming the very base and foundation of our civil system; and the government which does not acknowledge these rights, the rights of man in the strictest sense of the word, (notwithstanding the constant clamour against, and abuse of,

that phrase) not as theories and speculations, but as active and living principles, is not, and cannot be, a legitimate government.

“ The inferences to be drawn from the style of argument which has been used in defence of the duration of these dreadful laws in Ireland, furnish a sentence of condemnation against the government of that country, much stronger than any that was ever used by those who, so unavailingly, raised their voices against a system of terror, of free quarters, of conflagration, and torture. If it be true, as they allege, that treason has tainted that people to the bone—if the poison of jacobinism, as they call it, pervades the whole mind of the multitude—if disloyalty is so rooted and so universal, that military despotism can alone make the country habitable—it would be against the experience of the world that such a wide and deadly disaffection could, or ever did, exist in any nation on the globe, except from the faults of its governors.

“ To this country too—to England, what a contradiction is the conduct of these honorable gentlemen to their professions! This nation was to reap marvellous blessings from the union; but of what benefit is the junction of four or five millions of traitors? *Such*, the *laws* proposed by these honorable gentlemen tell you, the Irish are;—but such I tell you they are *not*. A grosser outrage upon truth, a greater libel upon a generous people, never before was uttered or insinuated. They who can find reason for all this, in any supposed depravity of the Irish, totally misunderstand their character. Sir, I love the

Irish nation. I know a good deal of that people. I know much from having seen it ; I know more from private friendship with individuals. The Irish may have their faults like others. They may have a quick feeling of injury, and not be very patient under it ; but I do affirm, that, of all their characteristics, there is not one feature more predominant, in every class of the country, from the highest to the lowest order, than *gratitude for benefaction, and sensibility to kindness.* Change your system towards that country, and you will find them another sort of men. Let impartiality, justice, and clemency, take place of prejudice, oppression, and vengeance, and you will not want the aid of martial law, or the terror of military execution.

“ HAVING SAID SO MUCH UPON THE AFFAIRS OF IRELAND, let me recur to what I before urged regarding this new ministry. It is not that the change is for the worse upon the whole, for no change can be so ;—but, let me ask you, what is it that the public can expect from men, whose fundamental principle is adherence to that system of their predecessors, which has brought this empire into its present circumstances ; and whose only novelty, or deviation from that system, consists in their repugnance to the only measure of those whom they have succeeded, that has any pretension to good policy ? Not so, they will answer ; ‘ the system was most wise.’ Well, be it so ; this ‘ wise system’ has reduced this country to the state in which it is at this moment involved : tell me how you intend to get us out of the danger. By the very means that got us in, is

the inevitable inference.—Do you try no change of system? No; by no means; we go the beaten course.—Is there nothing new in your plan? Yes; our predecessors designed to restore four millions of our fellow-subjects to the rights of the constitution. This we refuse. In all things else we follow their example.

“ Such is this new ministry—and such the obvious hope from their appointment.

“ Upon the question with the Northern powers, the noble Lord (HAWKESBURY), if rumor err not, has been as high-toned and intractable in his official communications as even his ‘vigorous’ predecessor. Respecting France, the whole country could not afford a selection of men so calculated to excite distrust, and suggest *argumenta ad homines*. If any thing could justify the sporting with human life, never, sure, was occasion more apt of retorting the insulting folly made to BONAPARTE’s most conciliating proposals of last year. With how good a grace might he not answer, ‘With you I cannot treat—you are but newly in the possession of a doubtful power’—‘I must have experience and the evidence of facts’—‘You have called me a child and champion, and sometimes a puppet’—‘You are the children and champions of those whom I have covered with indelible disgrace’—‘How do I know that I can place the least reliance upon any treaty made with men who, indeed, may be mere puppets, moved by wires, in the hands of others?’ Thus might BONAPARTE cast back upon this government the absurd impediments

that were raised against any negotiation with him in January, 1800:—but I believe him to be much too wise and too good a man; too sensible of that which constitutes his truest glory, the desire of giving a durable peace to the world; to resort to such objections, or descend, upon so important a subject, to repeat their words, whose example he has scorned in so many other instances. O! what a contrast is his conduct, to that of the gentlemen over against me!

“ To the reiterated importunities of this side of the house, in favor of negotiation, they have replied alternately in this style. When beaten, ‘ What,’ said they, ‘ will you treat now and dispirit the country?—is the moment of defeat the time for negotiation?’ Not so Bonaparte. Even in the state to which the Directory reduced France—even before he drew the sword from the scabbard, he humbled himself, (if the noble wish of stopping the effusion of human blood could indeed be humility) to reconcile those honorable gentlemen to the restoration of the world’s tranquillity; and it will be matter of curious reflection for after ages to observe *such* a man as Bonaparte almost upon his knees in supplicating *such* conductors of war as those over against me, for *peace*. In the crisis of success, when we implored them to take advantage of the victories of our fleets, they have replied, ‘ What treat *now*, when we are so near the object of the war? Will you sully the glories of your navy?’ But Bonaparte, who gained not a victory without making a proposal of peace, did not think that the glories of Marengo or Hohen-

linden were in danger of fading, (in truth, it makes them shine with additional splendor) from the constant proffers of pacification made by him who never won a laurel without showing the olive at the same time. We, on this side of the house, have been taunted with unnerving the people and undervaluing their resources, at the several epochs when, truly describing the country, we urged the other side to peace. I am no advocate for despondency,—and should be the last person in the world to countenance a sentiment of despair in either man or nation: but I am sure that the true road to ruin, for either, would be to shut their eyes to the reality of their danger. How stands that point with the rival government?

“Did Bonaparte blink the difficulties of France? It is possible that, with a view to enhance his own renown, he may have magnified, but it is quite certain that he did not understate, its distresses of any sort. Far from it. He exhibited to his country a strong picture of national misery; and to rouse the energies of France to those extraordinary achievements which immortalise the short campaigns of the last year, his proclamation was what?—The answer of the gentlemen over against me to his entreaties for peace.

“Not all his conquests—not all his fame—so effectually recruited the thinned phalanxes of the French armies as that solemn appeal to the good sense of France, that stimulus to revolutionary ardor, and to the proud passion of national independence,—the ever notable reply of **LORD GRENVILLE** to **M. TALLEYRAND**. Ma-

rengo and Hohenlinden grew out of that famous paper.

“ To a frank but respectful letter, addressed to the king of England, they say ‘ Restore the Bourbons’—or, in other words, ‘ Go hang yourself. If you would give a speedy peace to France, re-instate that family, whose first act, in all probability, would be to bring yourself to the scaffold.’—Bonaparte was so perverse and strange a man, that he rejected this good advice, and would not consent to his own destruction and dishonor, by replacing France under that tyranny from which the revolution freed her, and which nine years of unheard-of sufferings and of martial prowess, without example in history, had been consecrated to annihilate.

“ The honorable gentleman (Mr. PITT) seemed to kindle at the supposed charge of making the restoration of monarchy a *sine qua non* of peace. Had that charge been really urged, I leave any man to judge whether the means of supporting it are not abundantly supplied by Lord GRENVILLE’s memorable dispatch; but, though he tells us that we are callous to the refutation, the honorable gentleman, in fact, is combating a shadow, for *that* is *not* the charge. A total failure of all the declared objects of the war, of which the restoration of monarchy was one of the foremost, is the charge we make; a charge which he has not answered and cannot answer; and if the honorable gentleman cannot distinguish between a motive to war, and a *sine qua non* of peace, he must have left his understanding behind him in his office.

We accuse him of ruining the house of Austria; and we say that his conduct could have no other tendency, and, in the nature of things, could have *no other effect*. When, in the correspondence with M. OTTO, a naval armistice was refused (rightly refused perhaps, and perhaps reasonably demanded in the triumphant situation of France—I am not entering into that question), as the condition to joint negotiation with Austria, M. OTTO says, that the first consul, though he will admit no English minister to Luneville, is ready and willing to enter into a separate treaty with this country. The honorable gentleman evades this proposal by pleading good faith to an ally, which ally deprecates his pretended and pernicious fidelity. The honorable gentleman rejects the only terms on which he could reasonably hope to serve the emperor, and exacts the strict fulfilment of the emperor's engagement 'not to make a separate peace before a given time.' Unwarned by Marengo and Hohenlinden,—untaught by the skill and perfection with which that vast line of operations, extending from Nice to Mentz, had been conducted in the fatal experiment of the preceding summer,—the honorable gentleman stands upon the due and forfeit of his treaty; and, as if the letter of this treaty, the wealth of England, and every other instigation by which he could goad on this devoted prince had not been sufficient, he tells this house and the world, that, 'as a *spectator*, even as a spectator, he would advise the emperor to *go on*,' selecting this word, as if his evil genius prompted it, for the purpose of illustrating the difference between *eloquence* and *wisdom*.

“ Now mark what followed.

“ All the slaughter that deluged the earth, from the *Mincio* to the *Meine*, a succession of constant victories, day after day, till even *Hohenlinden* itself is surpassed by the convention, or rather the capitulation of *Steyr*; and the head of the house of Austria owing his crown to the clemency, the forbearance, and magnanimity of that person, with whom these over against me have so often said it would be atrocious and foolish to negotiate. The honorable gentleman’s silence, ‘as a spectator,’ having had a full trial, a separate peace is signed at *Lunéville*, and the two hundred and fifty millions sterling, and the hundreds of thousands of British lives sacrificed, in order to overthrow the republican government, and abase the power of France, all terminate in a treaty which regulates and decides the destinies of the other great powers of Europe, without this country being so much as *named* in it. All this waste of wealth, of human life, and national honor, finish in the peace of *Lunéville*, in which Great Britain is less thought of and regarded, than the poorest, pettiest prince in the whole empire of Germany.

“ All this passes without a murmur; and the country, with a softish stupidity, sees *that*, like *every other* opportunity for restoring peace, go by in silence and stupor. Can all this be chance? — What! mere chance — that every, *every* reasonable moment should be lost, and every succeeding epoch for restoring the country to peace, should bring with it new and augmented disadvantages, growing in exact proportion to the duration of the war!

“ You refused peace at Paris, at Lisle, and twice in 1800. Then give us better terms now, or answer to your country for throwing those away which you might have then had.

“ Is the loss, for ever, of all these opportunities nothing but mistakes—mere venial errors?—Sir, they are high crimes against the well-being of this country; and we state them as such. We state them not upon assertion, but fact; grant us the inquiry this motion asks for, and we shall prove them. Aware of such an effect, what is the honorable gentleman’s conduct?

“ All his dexterity is employed to show this house that it will be giving itself, as it were, a slap on the face, if it adopt this motion; and he makes to his friends a most pathetic appeal upon grounds purely personal. Conscious that inquiry will ruin him, he urges the pride, the consistency, the feeling of the house to reject my honorable friend’s motion; and he warns his noble relation (Lord TEMPLE) to spare his compliments, if he withhold his vote—inquiring into his conduct, he avows, is the worst service his friends can render him. Sir, undoubtedly this is, so far, the truth, that a fair and honest inquisition would be his overthrow; and his conduct this night is a perfect comment upon his life. But is it thus with men who dread not investigation? The name of Lord FITZWILLIAM has been mentioned.

“ When a great question of state, affecting (as in the result has too fatally appeared) the peace of a whole nation, was at issue between that noble lord and the honorable gentleman’s govern-

ment, how did Lord FITZWILLIAM act? Did he skulk under the supposed sympathies of parliament? Did he say, Don't bury me under compliments, if you vote for inquiry? No, sir, that noble lord, in his place in the other house, provoked, demanded, and challenged inquiry; and it is in the memory of many now present, that there was not, in this house, one person connected with that noble lord, by private friendship, or by any other tie or intercourse, who did not vote for going fully into that transaction. Not so the honorable gentleman, because he is conscious of no such cause. This house rejected that motion, the adoption of which might have prevented the miseries that have since intervened. May God avert similar consequences from similar conduct this night!

“ If the honorable gentleman can continue to persuade this house against the revision of his conduct, I do not wonder that he should have seized the opportunity (afforded to him by an incident not too common in his history) of resigning the government into the hands of his friends. The honorable gentleman near him (Mr. DUNDAS), after telling the house an entertaining story of Charles the Second, sneers at us, and says he has not heard of any prayers offered up for *our* succeeding to their places.—Has the honorable gentleman heard of any prayers offered up for their return to them; or, in any part of the kingdom has there been a regret expressed at their retreat? Perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say, that no joy was more general, till that feeling was damped by the suspicion, that the change of ministry was, in reality, no change

at all. But the honorable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) has taken infinite pains to contradict this notion, and laboured very assiduously to prove that it was, in good sooth, a true change, and no juggle. 'Is office,' he asks, 'a thing, that people are generally eager to lay down?' Undoubtedly, in that respect, nothing is more easy than to ascertain the honorable gentleman's disposition, materials for deciding it being amply afforded by his history; and if the world really thinks, that he has relinquished the government merely because he found impediments to a wise and honest measure, then the honorable gentleman has the full effect of his character. It, however, is indisputable, that no politician in England, up to this period, has discovered less alacrity in parting with his place.

" Still more, to prove that the recent change is no imposition, he seems to lament that, being so near the end of his labours, he should be forced to yield to circumstances, and not be himself the person to terminate this glorious career;--he grieves at not being in *at the death*, as it were. Now, sir, what single object of the war the honorable gentleman has gained, or (except in his departure from office) what reason he has for concluding that this contest is near its close, he leaves us in utter ignorance.

" Whence does he draw his conclusion? Are the points for which this government contended more likely to be attained at present than they were at Paris or at Lille? Are you more likely to get the restoration of the Low Countries, which you so judiciously made a *fine qua non* of

the former negotiation, at *this* time than at *that*? Or, putting that matter quite out of sight, are you nearer to any other national pursuit *now* than *then*? Are *you* stronger? Is France weaker? What is it, I ask, that feeds the honorable gentleman's fancy into a notion that the end of this war is so near at hand?

“As to the late change of his majesty's servants, it is impossible for me to say whether it is a juggle or not; but, considering the genius of the honorable gentleman's contrivances, I can see many things in such a scheme which would make it not unsuitable for *him*, to hazard such a thing as an *experiment*. Blinded he would be, and under hopeless infatuation, not to feel the total impossibility of *his* ever reaching that goal at which he casts such a lingering look. I do not exactly charge him with avowed duplicity in conducting the different treaties which he opened with the enemy—but that he was grateful, even to piety, for the miscarriage of them all, is not to be denied. When, then, was he to be successful or sincere, who never negotiated without failing, and never failed without rejoicing? Not one single step could he take towards pacification, without stumbling upon something that must suggest to him his own humiliation, and without prompting the enemy with perpetual mistrust. Well, therefore, may the honorable gentleman pour forth his panegyrics upon his successors, who take this task (so ignominious for him and his colleagues) off his hands, and who, at the same time, proclaim their devotion to the principles of his administration. ‘There is no mystery,’ he assures us, ‘in his resignation: why

should it excite suspicion?—Is it necessary for a minister, quitting his office, to state the reasons, or complain of the causes, that led to it? These appeals have been made,' he tells us, 'by retired or discarded ministers, and often resorted to as a means of reinstatement.'—In the judgment of some men, a strain of sycophancy may be as efficacious a method.

"I know not whether all the reasons given by the honorable gentleman can satisfy the public, that the late change has been what he so strenuously contends it was; but of this I am quite sure, that to that public it is of very little consequence; for although the persons recently put into the offices of government can, with somewhat of less disgrace than their predecessors, propitiate the government of France, yet it appears to me an extravagant stretch of hope, that they, who are only known to the world as the followers, and who profess themselves the pupils of the late government, *can ever* restore this empire to tranquillity and safety—to peace abroad and to concord at home.

"With regard to this inquiry, the honorable gentleman says, that it has been the custom of this house to refuse such committees, unless in very extraordinary emergencies. Now, sir, though we have, in my opinion, made out an impregnable 'case of emergencies,' not only 'extraordinary,' but wholly unprecedented; yet I affirm, in direct contradiction to the honorable gentleman, that the custom of this house has been the diametrical reverse of what he states it. The custom of this house has been, *not to refuse*, but

to grant, such committees. To grant them has been the rule, to refuse them the exception, until the blessings of that honorable gentleman's administration had been inflicted upon this land. He is the only minister that ever lived in this country—he is the single man who made the denial of such committees his invariable maxim. You will find, upon your journals, a series of proofs in support of my assertion; and nothing in favour of the honorable gentleman, but some solitary instance that goes to establish the generality of the practice, instead of making against it. So settled has been this point, as a matter very much of course, in national difficulties, that the adoption of their propositions, to whom such committees are granted, is by no means a necessary consequence. I say this to quiet the alarms of any members who may be scared for the honorable gentleman's safety. It is perfectly competent for gentlemen to lay to their souls the flattering unction of supporting my honorable friend's motion, and afterwards rejecting his measures, as resulting from the inquiry.

“ I have frequently obtained from this house, committees on the state of the nation, and the measures I proposed in those committees have been repeatedly negatived. Both these things happened to me, and to this house, in the years 1778 and 1780. Nay, sometimes the house, as in the year 1740, has voted committees on the state of the nation, without taking any step whatever after. I have said more than enough, I think, to show that our motion rests upon the

best practice * of this house, and is bottomed upon precedent in its utmost strictness; even if we had not established, as I contend we have, a national exigence of sufficient magnitude to create a precedent.

“ Now, sir, having advanced all that I think necessary to urge in support of my honorable friend’s motion, I shall beg leave to say a single word upon a topic that has been several times alluded to in this debate, namely, my personal attendance in this house.

“ It is not for me to anticipate the determination of this house upon this night; and if I shall see any reasonable grounds for thinking, that my regular appearance here can be really beneficial to the public, the public shall have that benefit:—but if it is demonstrable, after the seas of blood that have been shed, and the hundreds of millions wasted;—after such sacrifice of treasure and of reputation,—after the failure of all the professed objects of this war, and after bringing immeasurable woes upon the country in consequence of it—after a series of military enterprises that excited the contempt, and, some of them, the horror of Europe—after the loss of all, and the ruin of many of our allies—after seeing the enemy aggrandised beyond all example, by the very efforts made to abase him—after having abused the matchless glories of our navy, from the true end of all justifiable warfare, a safe and honorable peace—after seeing the ninth

* Mr. Addington, the new minister and late speaker, in his speech, admitted the general course of practice to be as Mr. Fox stated it.

year of this direful contest advance us so little towards its close, that we see a host of new enemies commencing a new war, pregnant with mischief whether we are victorious or vanquished—after all the infringements that have been made upon the English constitution, and our bitter experience, that increasing the cause is not the true remedy for discontent—after all that we have seen in Ireland, and all that we feel in England—if all these things go for nothing, and that the division of this night should manifest the same determined confidence of this house in the executive government, and in that system which has produced all these effects, whether administered by its first leaders, or by their followers raised from secondary into superior offices—if that, sir, should be the obvious inference and fair conclusion from the votes of this night—then, sensible of the perfect inutility of my exertions in this place, I should certainly feel myself justified in exercising my own discretion, as to the degree of regularity with which I should attend this house.

“ How this house feels I know not: how it will act we shall shortly see. It is for the house to resolve how it shall best discharge its duty; I am quite satisfied that I have discharged mine.

“ Those who think that what I have stated are not evils, or arising from any defect of wisdom, of vigour, of foresight, of prudence; or of any of the qualities that constitute the essentials to an able and capable government; but that they are only slips of conduct; mere flaws of accident, affording no presumption against the

king's ministers, whom this house is constituted not to control or call to account, but to support and justify upon all occasions—such persons will, of course, vote against this inquiry. On the other hand, those who think that the misfortunes brought upon the country by the late ministers are the necessary consequence of original folly in the schemes, and of imbecillity in the execution; who think that the primary duty of this house is to guard the rights and protect the interests of the people,—*not to* fawn upon power, and be guided in all things by those whom the king nominates as his servants; who are of opinion that the dreadful state in which the country finds itself is not more owing to the misconduct of administration than to the absence from this house of that constitutional jealousy of the influence of the crown which ought to be the first characteristic of a house of commons, and from its uniform discountenance of all retrospection and revision—Those who think that the vice of the plans and principles that have brought the country to its present situation, is cruelly aggravated by that boundless confidence which this house has uniformly shown; and which, instead of deterring from evil or doubtful projects by the fear of punishment, operates as an encouragement to dangerous speculation, by the assurance of indemnity and safety—Those who think that this question ought not to depend upon regard to the late or to the present administration, to predilections or antipathies for that side of the house or this, but solely on the true *state of the nation*—Those who think that the reign of confidence has had full play—that the principle has been fairly tried and found wanting—who see, in its

bad effects, that it is not more unconstitutional than impolitic—and who firmly believe, as I believe, that the shortest and surest method of redeeming the country in the present crisis, is for this house to resort to the good old customs of our ancestors—to resume in the worst the jealous vigilance of the best times—to prove to both king and people, that blind submission must give way to zealous inquisition—and to manifest that the support of government must be accompanied by inquiry into its conduct. Those who think thus, will vote, as I shall, for the motion of my honorable friend.”

After Mr. Fox sat down, the new minister, Mr. ADDINGTON, made a short speech; and the house was so convinced and satisfied, that they decided against the inquiry, by 291 against 105.

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

(No I.)

Treaty of Commerce with Russia in 1766.

10th ARTICLE.—“ Permission to the subjects of the two powers, to go, come, and trade freely with those states, with which one or other of the parties shall then, or at any future period, be at war; provided they do not carry *military stores* to the enemy. From this permission, places actually blocked up or besieged are alone excepted; and, with the single exception of military stores, *all sorts of commodities* may, *without the least impediment*, be transported to the enemies of either power,” &c. &c.

11th ARTICLE—Recapitulates “ The military stores which are excepted in the 10th Article. These consist of twenty-one different sorts, all which are declared contraband, and not *one of which is a naval store or material* of any kind whatever.”

*Treaty between Great Britain and Holland in
1674.*

1st ARTICLE—Secures “ the mutual right of both powers to trade *freely with each other's enemies* ;”— and some doubt appearing as to the *extent* of this right, an explanatory déclaration is agreed upon in about a year after ; negociated and signed by Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE and eight Dutch commissioners, bearing date, at the Hague, the 30th of December, 1675 ; *viz.*

“ We do by these presents declare, that the true intent and meaning of the said articles is, and ought to be, that ships and vessels belonging to the subjects of either of the parties, can and might, not only pass, traffic, and trade from a neutral port or place, to a place in enmity with the other party, or from a place in enmity to a neutral place, but also from a port or place in enmity to a port or place in enmity with the other party, whether the said places belong to one and the same prince or state, or to several princes or states, with whom the other party is in war.”

(The right of trading to neutrals and enemies being guaranteed by the 1st and 2d article of the main treaty of the preceding year (1674), and subsequently explained by the above declaration; the 3d article recites the commodities in which the subjects of the two powers shall *not* trade ; and 4th, those in which they *may* trade;) *viz.*

3d ARTICLE—Recapitulates the contraband, consisting of about thirty different sorts.

4th ARTICLE—Recapitulates the free trade, in which are these words:—“ All kind of hemp, flax, and pitch ; ropes, sails, and anchors ; also masts and planks, boards and beams, of what sort of wood soever ; and all other materials requisite for the building or repairing ships, shall be *wholly reputed amongst free goods*, even as all other wares and commodities, so that the same may be freely transported and carried by the subjects of both powers even unto places in enmity with either, except only places besieged, environed, or invested.”

On the other hand in the

Treaty between Sweden and Oliver Cromwell, done in London, in 1656.

2d ARTICLE—Makes “ ships of war” one of the articles of contraband, and omits naval stores. Cromwell, then at war with Spain, pressed the Swedish ambassador to make naval stores contraband. The ambassador evaded Cromwell’s desire, by pleading that he had no instructions to that effect ; and Cromwell consented to ratify the said 2d article, so excluding naval stores from contraband, only upon condition that

“ As long as the war with Spain continued, neither his Swedish majesty nor his people shall carry hemp, pitch, tar, cables, sail-cloths, or masts, to any places in the dominion of Spain.”

Also, by the 3d Article of the Treaty between England and Denmark in 1670,

“Ships or other necessaries for the use of war” are comprehended in the list of things which the contracting parties engage that their subjects shall not furnish to the enemies of each other, “such enemies being aggressors.”

The words “other necessaries of war,” being very loose and inexplicit, there was a convention in 1680 between the two courts, in which naval stores are made contraband between England and Denmark, though recognized as innocent commerce between England and various other powers. As in the

Treaty of commerce between England and France, signed only three years before the above convention, namely in 1677, all these things are declared innocent commerce in these words :

4th ARTICLE.—“Hemp, flax, pitch, cordage, sails, anchors, masts, boards; wood wrought out of all sorts of trees, and that serve for the building of ships, as for the repair of them; *these are free to be carried to any port in neutrality, to the port of an enemy, and from one port of an enemy to another*,—towns besieged, blocked up, or invested, only excepted.”

(Not to multiply instances, it is clear from the above, that, in the words of Mr. Fox, ‘every thing upon this subject is the creature of convention.’)

(N° II.)

Upon the subject and mode of searching merchant vessels, there seems one uniform principle, and one system of

regulation between all the powers of Europe, viz. that no neutral should do for an enemy what the enemy could not do for himself.—That the goods of an enemy, found in a neutral, are forfeited; but nothing more is forfeited.—That neutrals should be furnished with certificates, or safe conducts, as they are fully set down in treaties between almost all the powers of Europe.—That in case a neutral does not exhibit such safe conducts or certificates, or there be any other just and urgent cause of suspicion, a ship is liable to search.

As Thus:

In the Treaty between England and Sweden in 1661.

“ When the merchandize ships or goods of either of the confederates or their subjects shall meet or be met in the open sea, in harbours, havens, countries, or other places whatsoever, by the men of war or privateers, or by the subjects and inhabitants of the other confederate, after producing only their safe conducts or certificates aforesaid, nothing further shall be demanded of them, no inquiry whatsoever shall be made into the goods, ships, or men; much less shall they be damaged or molested, but shall be freely let go, to prosecute their voyage and purpose. But if this solemn and stated form of the certificate be not produced, or there be any other just and urgent cause of suspicion why this ship ought to be searched, (which shall only be deemed justifiable in this case, and not otherwise;) then if the goods of the enemy are found in the ships of the confederate, that part only which belongs to the enemy shall be made prize, and the other which belongs to the confederate shall be immediately restored.”

To the same effect, by the treaty of commerce between England and Holland concluded at London 1674, it is provided in the 5th article: “ If any ship belonging to the subjects of the contracting parties shall in the open sea, or elsewhere, meet any ships of war belonging to the other power, the said ships of war shall keep at a convenient distance, and only send out their boat; and it shall be lawful for them only with two or three men to go on board such merchant ships or vessels, that the passport or sea brief may be shewn to them by the captain or master of such merchant ship; and the ship which shall shew the same shall freely pass, and it shall not be lawful to molest, search, divert, or detain the same from her intended voyage.”

With a view to abridgment, and to avoid unnecessary repetitions, the substance of the above is recited in almost every treaty, where search is provided for; the rules being

“ First—That contraband alone is forfeited.

“ Secondly—That search is to take place only upon lawful and urgent suspicion.

“ Thirdly—That the ships of war shall not come within a certain distance of the trading ships, and shall only send two or three men a-board, to see the passes or certificates.”

(N° III.)

Between the treaty of neutrality recently concluded by the powers of the North, and that of 1780, there is no material difference. As the articles of contraband vary between England and those powers *respectively*, this variation is provided for at the end of the 2d article of the new treaty of neutrality, which recites the usual articles of contrabands, and then adds—

“ It is also hereby agreed, that the present article shall be *without prejudice* to the *particular stipulations of former treaties* with the *powers at war*, by virtue of which the things above mentioned are allowed *or prohibited*.”

THE REGULATIONS to the subjects of the King of Sweden, annexed to the recent treaty of the Northern powers, consist of fifteen articles. As denoting the good or evil mind of the neutral, towards the belligerent powers, these regulations are not unworthy of notice. The fear of swelling this pamphlet too much dissuades the Reporter from inserting any more of them than the 2d article, which is in these words:

“ The captain of the neutral ship must be provided with all papers requisite and proper for his voyage. Of this kind are, a certificate of the place where the vessel was built; an invoice; letter shewing the cargo not contraband; Turkish and Latin passports; a certificate of the magistrate of the place; a pass for the crew; a copy of the oath of the owner; a charter party, with the subscription of the freighter, the captain, and the person freighting the vessel; a manifest with the like subscriptions, containing a list of the different articles of the lading, and the condition of the intended voyage.”

The 4th article prohibits the use of a foreign flag, of false certificates, &c. And the whole body of the regulations (the due observance of which alone can entitle the trade ship to the benefits of the league), seems fairly enough to guard against frauds or abuse.

(N° IV.)

The reader cannot but have observed, even from the foregoing extracts, that whatever doubts may exist re-

garding other matters, these two points are clear beyond all dispute, by the uniting concurrence of all the powers of Europe,—namely, *that contraband in all cases is forfeited*,—*that no right of navigation extends to blockaded places*.

Hear the words of Lord CARYSFORT, the English ambassador at Berlin, to Count HAUGWITZ, the Prussian minister, as extracted from his letter, dated November the 15th, 1800.

Lord CARYSFORT says that

“ He has reason to believe that the Prussian ship (the Triton) was laden with *contraband goods*;—that it was captured by an English man of war as it was entering into the Texel, that is to say, into a port belonging to the enemies of his majesty; and—that it was restored as soon as the officer who had the charge of it could be informed of the orders of his superiors !”

Such is the conduct to the king of Prussia of those “superiors !” who could not trust Lord WHITWORTH to Copenhagen, without sending Admiral DIXON to the Categat,—and who superseded Mr. DRUMMOND by Lord NELSON.

In two days after his first letter, Lord CARYSFORT addresses himself to Count HAUGWITZ, expressing his astonishment at the march of Prussian troops to Cuxhaven, “ notwithstanding,” to repeat his lordship’s words, “ *the complete satisfaction* given to his Prussian majesty on all these points.”

Does the reader remember the Count’s answer to this representative of the king of England, upon this “ *complete satisfaction* ?”

“ The Prussian vessel,” replies Count HAUGWITZ, “ has, it is true, been restored to its owner; but the mode



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of release was, in every respect, as irregular as the proceedings which had previously taken place with respect to it!"

(N° V.)

Within nine days of Mr. Fox's giving these too prophetic opinions, an event occurred which sets him and his opponents in a point of contrast that should rivet the attention of the world. He says, " Hold your arm, and try your pen. Victory cannot give you more than you may obtain by prudence. Granting that you reduce Denmark to the lowest stage of national degradation, that of apologizing for engaging in this league, what will you gain by it? The claim will revive with the means of enforcing it."

Mark, *à contrá*, the conduct of ministers, and its result.

Extract from Sir HYDE PARKER'S Letter to the Governor of Cronenberg, dated the 27th of March, 1801.

" From the hostile transaction of Denmark *sending away his Britannic Majesty's charge-d'affaires*, I am anxious to know whether you have received orders to fire upon the British fleet as they pass into the Sound?"

The Danish Governor's Answer, dated the 28th, (after inquiring of his Court.)

" The King of Denmark did *not* send away the charge-d'affaires:—he, upon *his own demand*, obtained a passport.

“ *In case your Excellency should think proper to make any proposals to the King of Denmark, I wish to be informed thereof, before the fleet approaches nearer to the castle,*” &c.

Then follows the battle in Copenhagen Roads, and a victory in favour of England; which must be placed in the foremost rank of naval glory, since it added to the renown of even Lord NELSON. This victory, of which the English language does not admit a grander description than ‘that it had added to the renown of even Lord NELSON,’ terminates thus :

Extract of the 2d Article of the Convention, signed on the 9th of April, 1801, by Lord Nelson and the Danish Negotiator.

“ The armed ships of his Danish majesty shall remain in their present condition; and the treaty of armed neutrality shall, so far as concerns the active co-operation of Denmark, remain suspended during this armistice” ! ! ! !

MAY, 1801.